to meet the emerging global competition and to attract investment and create employment opportunities. Some of the important initiatives taken are:

(i) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1.4.1999 to facilitate the modernisation and upgradation of the sector.

(ii) Weaving, processing and garment machinery, which are covered under TUFS, have been extended the facility of accelerated depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

(iii) The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

(iv) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centers, a scheme "Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.

(v) De-reservation of woven garment industry.

(vi) SSI investment limit for hosiery/knitwear sector increased from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crores.

Concessions for powerloom sector

1610. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the powerloom sector has demanded more concessions;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Indian Cotton Mills' Federation has urged the Government to ensure a level playing field for different segments of the textile industry; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In their pre-budget memorandums (2004-05) to the Government the Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL) and other powerloom associations had strongly pleaded for removal of CENVAT on fabrics and cotton yarn as well as abolition of additional excise duty. As per the Budget 2004-05 presented in the Parliament on 8.7.04, the duty structure of textiles has been completely revised. The CENVAT Scheme for textiles has been made optional. The mandatory duty will now be imposed only on man-made fibres/yarns (@ 24% on Polyester Filament Yarn including textured yarn and 16% on all other filament yarns and man-made fibres.) Except for these duties other textile goods have been fully exempted if no credit of duties is taken under the CENVAT Credit Rules. For those opting to pay the duty and thereby avail of duty credit, the applicable rates of duty will now be only 4% for pure cotton textile items (*i.e.* yarns, fabrics, garments and made-ups) and 8% for other textile items including yarn, fabrics, garments and made-ups. Besides, Additional Duty on Textiles & Textile Articles (AT&T) and Additional Excise Duty in lieu of Sales Tax for goods of special importance have been abolished.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Indian Cotton Mills' Federation in its pre-budget Memorandum (2004-05) made various suggestions pertaining to rationalization of excise duty rates for all textiles products, abolition of multiple duties levied on Textiles, reduction in customs duty on raw cotton, man-made fibres and their raw materials, etc.

Financial assistance to revival of textile sector

1611. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal received from Government of Kerala seeking financial assistance to revive the textile sector in the State;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to grant assistance to Kerala for the above purpose;